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1 Blues March (I'm Marchin') Love Is The Key • I'm Always Dancin' To The Music • You

2 Georgia On My Mind High On Sunshine • Don't Ask My Neighbors • Happy I'm Happy

Produced by Benny Golson and George Butler for Benny Golson Productions

All saxophone solos by Benny Golson
All songs arranged by Benny Golson

Reggie Lee once said to me, "Benny, good music has come back," and I agreed with her. But not only has good music come back, there is an awareness of music that has never before existed. The spectrum is broad, the appreciation deep, the appeal wide, the enthusiasm rampant.

We've seen the birth of record album offers via television – not there old, some very old, thus the nostalgia craze. B. B. King once said, "It's great being rediscovered." Chuck Berry is also enjoying his re-discovery and there are many others. The first time around the kids who enjoy them today weren't born yet.

Third stream music (blending of classical and jazz music) died quietly many years ago; however, we have a modern-day homogeny called fusion music (blending of Jazz and Rock) which is enjoying much success. It's taught many Jazz fans something about Rock and vice versa. It's a healthy music.

Earth, Wind & Fire and its white counterpart, The Bee Gees, L.T.D., Steely Dan, Rose Royce, The O'Jays, Heatwave, Fleetwood Mac, Parliament, The Commodores, Graham Central Station, The Emotions, Brick and many, many others all have something to say – each one saying it a little differently than the other. But there is a thread, live and recorded, transcending all their varieties of styles and presentations including the B. B. Kings and Chuck Berrys. Yes, there is a thread that is common to them all. What is that thread? DANCING! When people hear their music they want to dance. For example, this era is the progenitor of disco music and disco music has become synonymous with dancing.

Concert halls are being filled more often than not with capacity crowds and although those crowds come to sit and listen, large portions of those crowds find it all but impossible to remain in their seats, looking and listening. They soon fall victim to the involuntary command to dance and they do so in the aisles or right there in front of their seats. Those who don't rise to the occasion can usually be seen swaying or bowing the head, snapping the fingers, patting the feet, putting the body through subtle and not so subtle gyrations, emitting unintelligible grunts and groans, hunching the shoulders sharply and all this in time with the music. One would wonder if this was only the warm up, the gearing up, the winding up so as to explode out of the seat.

At a recent concert, this happened over and over again. For example, a certain girl there would get out of her seat onto her feet leaving those feet inside the music. Every time it happened the people behind her were unable to see very well. A kind reminder from her neighbors and the girl was down again. Finally, the girl leaped to her feet and said, "I'm sorry! I just can't help it" and continued dancing without interruption. Today, people who enjoy the many recording artists irresistably want to dance to their music. In fact, if you were to ask anyone of them, that person would probably say, "I'm always dancin' to the music."

"Blues March" has been around now for some 20 years but as a Jazz tune being first performed by Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. It was subsequently recorded and played by many in the U.S.A. and Europe. It has even been performed by college bands at football games during half-time. Heretofore, the opening feeling was always strictly military-like and rudimentary in nature; that is, during the melody. The solo section would sometimes become nothing more than a loose, blues, blowing vehicle. However, in this recording I've departed from that feeling and that format.

Picture with me, if you will, a rather ragged Black band in, let's say, New Orleans, marching to the beat that they themselves create. As they strut and swagger proudly from side to side while playing, we see the tails of their sadly worn, hand-me-down, loosely fitting full dress suits with a button missing here and there flapping happily after them. Some of their white shirts are questionable as to purity of color. Some of the black bow ties are small and thin whereas some are big and fat. Some are lying horizontally under the chin and some are slightly angular, reaching up to absorb the sweat slowly dripping down from under the chin. We see tattered and faded top hats with brims and tops precariously hanging on. Some of the pants are baggy and shiny; some are tight. We see some dragging behind shoe heels and others playfully exposing ankle bones through what appears to be white socks. The shoes have long since become impervious to shining. We see a small toe here and then dropped-shily trying to be seen by peeking out. Some resemble listing ships about to capsize, some remain proud and somewhat erect reflecting what they used to be. And they keep marchin' ...

The instruments resemble priceless artifacts. Some gold, some silver with lacquer missing at random. The instruments are never cleaned. Obviously, the owners don't want to risk washing away the funky soul of those instruments.

Yes, this is without a doubt a soulful marching band and the two things we immediately become aware of are their happy, smiling faces and their desire to play.

There is a very technical brass section that they keep returning to and although it seems incongruous with their abilities, it's not. They've rehearsed that particular section with spartan-like determination for weeks and weeks, as so many local musicians have the custom of doing, just so they could "show off" – bedazzle the crowd. And they keep marchin' ...

We notice other sounds in this marching band not usually related to a march – a metal stopper, tuned cow bells, spoons, a gravel shaker, things that add to the rhythmic and happy feeling. Since nobody ever told them they couldn't or shouldn't use them, they use them.

The girls' voices, too, really have nothing to do with a marching band; however, these wives, sisters, cousins and friends who heard so many of those rehearsals that lasted on into the night just happened to come up with what you hear them doing, so they walk beside the band as they play and commence singing when the spirit so moves them. And they keep marchin' ...

Benny Golson

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Remix Engineer: Don Hahn, A&M, Los Angeles
Mastering Engineer: Bernie Grundman, A&M Recording Studios, Los Angeles
Music Coordinators: Jules Chaikin, Maurice Spears
Concert Master: Paul Shure

Rhythm Section:
Drums: James Gadson
Guitars: Dennis Budimir, Berrance Blackman, Ray Parker, Jr. (courtesy of Arista Records, Inc.)
Keyboards: Bobby Lyle (courtesy of Capitol Records), John Barnes
Synthesizers: Michael J. Boddicker
Fender Bass: David Shields
Percussionist: Paulinho daCosta (courtesy of Pablo Records)
Synthesizer Solo on Blues March ("I'm Marchin') by: Michael J. Boddicker
Lead vocals on Love Is The Key and You by: Marlonette Jenkins
Lead vocal on High On Sunshine by: James Gadson
Background vocals: Maxine Willard Waters (courtesy of Warner Bros. Records, Inc.), Julia Tillman Waters (courtesy of Warner Bros. Records, Inc.), Jessica Smith (courtesy of London Records), Clydie King
Vocal solo on I'm Always Dancin' To The Music by: Maxine Willard Waters
Personal Management for Benny Golson: The Tenmakers
Illustration: Steve Smith.
Design: Nancy Donald.
This album is dedicated to my mother, Celedia Little (1911-1978).

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